Major/Minor: Global Studies and Asian Studies

Country: Taiwan Program: ICLP Term & Year Abroad: Year, 2008-2009

*What type of student should go on this program (ex: personality traits, major, etc)?
One that wants to learn Mandarin (traditional), Taiwanese culture, Chinese culture and have an interest in trying out new things. Any major is fine but a tiny interest in Chinese would be suitable.

Instructors
- What were they like when compared to UCSB instructors?
  They were extremely caring and motherly. They really want you to learn Mandarin and accommodate to your needs and level of understanding.

- Could you call them by their first names?
  We knew their first names but never called them by their first names.

- Was the student/instructor relationship more formal than at UCSB?
  Just about the same: not very formal but the teachers’ abroad want to know more about the American lifestyle and help you on understanding anything about Taiwan.

- Were they available for help during office hours?
  They don’t have office hours but they are more than willing to meet up with you and chat. They even take you out sometimes to explore the city.

Courses
- Were the courses more difficult when compared to UCSB courses?
  They were very intense because it was 3 hours of intensive language classes but they were manageable.

- Was the grading system similar to UCSB?
  I believe so.

- How did the course structure differ? Ex) did you have many assignments or just finals?
  There was dictation and homework for every class. There are about 3-4 test and a final for a semester.

- Did you have oral and/or written exams?
  It depends on the class but there were definitely written exams and occasional oral exams.

- Was the final exam schedule flexible or inflexible?
  The Final exam was scheduled at a certain time but if students could not make it, the teacher would accommodate to their needs.

- What kind of academic support, if any, did you receive?
  I received support from my dorm advisor, my language partner (which is assigned to you), the liason officer and the teachers.

- Did you find you needed to be more independent and take more initiative abroad?
YES! I didn’t have any family there and my Mandarin was not great when I was first there so I had to rely on my own abilities to get around the country.

- **Was classroom participation expected?**
  YES, there is about 4-7 students in the class so participation is necessary.

- **How were the host university courses different than UCSB courses?**
  You are required to take 3 language courses that revolved around different topics to enhance your reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

- **Were classes usually on certain days/times and for how long?**
  Each class was an hour long and there were 3 classes in the afternoon from 1-4. They were 5 days a week.

- **What is the class culture like? How important was it to be punctual? Could you eat/drink in class?**
  The class is very small so attendance and participation is required. You can eat and drink in the class but do not make it a habit. If you know you will be late, tell someone to pass on the word or email the professor, especially when you will be absent from class so they won’t worry about you.

**Language**

- **In which languages were the courses offered?**
  Mandarin (Traditional) and some NTU classes are taught in English

- **What language did you take your courses in?**
  Mandarin

- **If you took your courses in a foreign language, please provide info about your overall experience, difficulty of courses, language acquisition, placement exams, etc.**
  The language classes were in intensive but manageable. Be sure to divide your time wisely and ask for help whenever you need it from your peers or teachers

**Host University**

- **How large is the university? Student enrollment and approx campus size (smaller than UCSB)? Is it an urban campus with many tall buildings or just a few building?**
  The campus is about the size of UCSB. It is an urban campus that is located in Taipei. It is located near lots of night markets and shopping areas.

- **Do the local students live on campus, at home, or off campus?**
  Local students mainly live on campus but some do live off campus and at home.

- **If not located in the city center,**
  - How far or close is it to the city?
  - What type of public transportation could you take – cost?
  - Could students take cabs -cost?
  - How long would it take to get to the city center?
- Are there student clubs on campus that UC students could join?
  YES! Local students love joining campus orgs and they are very passionate about each org. This would probably be the easiest way to make local friends and get in touch with the local culture.

- Is there a bookstore on campus? Where did you get your books?
  There is a bookstore near the campus. My books were sold in our building.

- Is there a computer lab on campus? Or, should students bring laptops?
  There are computers available but limited. The printer can be found in the library. Students should definitely bring their own laptop.

- What types of establishments are in the university’s neighborhood? (cafes, stores, etc)
  2 night markets, lots of restaurants, stores, convenience stores, cafes, apartments and 2 entrances to the MRT

### Housing
- What types of accommodations are available to UC students?
  Dorms

- How close are they to campus?
  They are off-campus but just a block away

- How did you find your housing?
  It was provided through the program

- Where did you live and with whom?
  I lived in Guoqing, which is not available now. First semester, I lived with another UC student and the second semester, I lived with an international student from Japan.

- If you lived off campus, was it difficult to find an apartment and roommate?

- Were the rooms nicer or not than I.V./UCSB dorms?
  The rooms were spacious and accommodated well. It was a simple dorm room.

- Was it more expensive than living in I.V.? How much was a typical rent cost in US dollars?
  It was cheaper than living in IV. My dorm room cost about $400 USD a semester

- How/who did you pay for housing?
  We paid to their version of the BARC office. During the orientation, the people in charge will tell you where to go to pay for housing.

### Food
- What was the food like?
Taiwan is known for their food. They usually love eating at night. There is a large assortment of food to choose from. There are many places that serve the same thing but you have to go in search of the best place for that one dish. Try all the local food as well as the international food offered at restaurants. Night Markets are the place to be for local food. It can get crowded but it is great for shopping and eating. Each city in Taiwan have a special delicacy so try them out when you travel around.

- **Where did you eat most of your meals? Cafeterias, restaurants, street vendors, etc?**
  Sometimes from the stores on campus, but for the most part from Night Markets and restaurants. Food is generally cheap there, especially the fruits, but it can get expensive like from the restaurants.

- **How much was an average meal?**
  Street vendors range from a few dollars while restaurants, depending on the location, can get really pricey. It just depends on what you are craving for.

- **What time of day did people eat lunch/dinner?**
  The people in Taiwan generally eat pretty late. Lunch is around noon-ish while dinner can extend all through the night. There are plenty of 24hr places too.

- **Would it be difficult for vegetarians to find meals?**
  I don’t think so but tell the waitress or waiter if you are. There are plenty of vegetarian dishes because vegetables are necessary in Taiwan.

**Travel/Safety**

- **If not discussed above, describe the public transportation system around your host university/city?**
  MRT, cab and bus are the main ways of getting around the city. The bus is the cheapest system and the MRT is a really convenient way to travel but it is limited in the places that you can go.

- **Did you feel safe in your host city? Are there tips you would offer future students?**
  I definitely felt safe in the city but be aware of pick-pocketers because they do exist in every city. Be sure to call your credit card companies and tell them you are abroad and will be using your card abroad so they won’t think someone stole it.

- **Describe the public transportation in your host country?**
  MRT, cab and bus.

- **Was it difficult/easy to travel to neighboring countries?**
  It was really easy to travel to other countries. The tickets were cheap considering I was already in Asia so use your breaks wisely.

**Host City/Country**

- **What was the weather like?**
  During the summer, it is humid and in September, it is Typhoon season so be aware of strong winds and heavy rain. Always bring an umbrella with you. You will lose many of them so don’t waste your money on an expensive one. During the winter and early spring, it will be very cold so be sure to have several jackets. Late spring and early summer is really warm and humid.

- **Describe your host city…which California/US city is it similar to (if any)?**
- **What were some interesting/fun things that you did in the host city?**  
Besides traveling all over the city, my friend and I would take the 24hr bus and travel to different cities in Taiwan. We would spend the day there and come back at night. We would find places that would become a regular location to go such as the many attractions around Taipei 101.

- **How international was your host city in terms of tourism, cultural diversity, and international businesses?**  
They city is definitely an international city that combine the best of the west to the best of the east. There were lots of tourism, cultural diversity and international businesses heading to China but stopping in Taiwan.

**Culture**

- **Describe the cultural differences that you observed/encountered.**
  - **Time & punctuality**
    Nothing out of the ordinary.
  - **Eye contact & staring**
    There wasn’t any rule to not give eye contact but it is best to not stare.
  - **Relationships**
    The local people value respect and friendship. They want to bond with you and get to know you. They are generally friendly and helpful. Since this is an Asiam country, PDA is not common. Taipei is a much more contemporary city as oppose to the country side which is more traditional.
  - **More formal dress in general, for women, for school, etc?**
    The fashion in Taiwan is inspired by South Korea and Japan. Taiwan has there own funky fashion, especially layering. For school, it is basically generic type of clothing with a splash of Taiwan and for clubbing it is a little more fashionable. What you buy there is not what you would wear here on campus.
  - **Alcohol consumption**
    The age to drink is 18 and above. Drinking is common in the clubs, bars, restaurants and KTV(karaoke). On Wednesday night, it is ladies night, where the women all get free entrance and drinks. It is best not to binge drink because you will get kicked out of the club/bar.
  - **What culture shock did you go through?**
    I did not feel such a culture shock here because I’ve been to China but there were some things that surprised me like the contemporary side of the city and the conservative side of the country. It mainly wasn’t a culture shock but an experience of something new.
  - **Other?**
    Be open-minded.

**Banking**

- **Were credit cards widely accepted?**
  I only used my Visa card once when I was there to purchase tickets but for the most part, they were accepted. Be aware of the international fees that the credit card company might charge on you. Ask the company before you use it abroad.

- **Did you open a local bank account? Was it easy?**
  No I didn’t.
- If you did not open a local bank account, was it easy to withdraw money from the ATM?
  Which banks were popular & had low ATM fees?
  It was extremely easy to withdraw money but there was a service charge because it was an international debit card. I just used my card once in awhile to withdraw the max amount of money.

- **Were there ATMs on campus?**
  Yes. There are atms in each convenient store, which are everywhere.